Artisphere draws record applications

Nearly 100 more artists than last year apply to be part of May festival

By Ann Hicks
ARTS WRITER
ahicks@greenvillenews.com

Greenville's Arts Weekend, "Artisphere," has received a record number of visual artist applications for its 2010 festival scheduled for May 7-9, said Kerry Murphy, the organization's executive director.

On Saturday, a panel of jurors will be in Greenville to select the final list of participating artists from the record 682 submissions. The number represents 97 more submissions than received for the 2009 festival and a nearly 250 percent increase since the inaugural Artisphere event in 2005.

"The jury did a great job last year. We received numerous unsolicited compliments on the quality of the artists' work," Murphy said. "We were also thrilled by the fact that the average artist sale went up from $3,700 in 2008 to $4,100 in 2009."

Artists raved about the sales, said Murphy, and said they did better in Greenville than in other cities with larger populations and older festivals.

"We are real proud of the fact that 84 of the 100 artists who exhibited in the 2009 festival reapplied for 2010," Murphy said. Applications have come from three continents and 43 states in the United States, among them 79 artists from South Carolina, of which 34 are from Greenville. The final list of participating artists will be released in January.

"Artists tell us they appreciate how well the festival is organized, the success in sales and our hospitality," Murphy said.

Murphy also attributes the increase in the numbers to Artisphere's new online application process at Zapplication.org, and the festival's ranking in the Top 50 by Greg Lawler's "Art Fair Sourcebook," which ranks 600 top-selling fine arts festivals and shows nationwide.